

**StarTribune.com** MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTAEXHIBIT 2  
DATE 1/12/09  
HB 30**Election judges: the ultimate civics classroom**By **PATRICE RELERFORD**, Star Tribune

October 31, 2008

Despite his strong interest in the election, Kong Vue would normally be on the sidelines on Tuesday as his parents, neighbors and 18-year-old classmates headed to the polls.

But thanks to his social studies teacher and the city's elections office, the 17-year-old North High senior is one of more than 200 Minneapolis high school students trained to operate voting equipment, register voters and perform other duties as trainee election judges.

In Minneapolis, high school students will make up about 10 percent of the more than 2,000 workers who will staff about 130 city polling places on Tuesday. Election officials from cities around the metro area, including St. Paul and suburbs such as Eagan, said students are a welcome addition to their staff as they brace for record voter turnouts in many precincts.

Teachers and administrators said working at the polls gives 16- and 17-year-olds a front row seat to Election Day.

"I'm going to be a part of the voting day instead of just sitting at home," said Vue, who will work a full day as a trainee election judge at Jenny Lind Elementary School on the North Side.

According to the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office, election judge trainees must be at least 16 years old, enrolled in a Minnesota high school or home schooled, a U.S. citizen, able to read, speak and write English and have approval from a parent or guardian.

"I've never been to a polling place or anything like that," said North High senior Zahkyia Holley, 18, who will vote for the first time Tuesday before her shift. "I didn't know the process was so serious. I thought you just showed up with ID, but there's someone there monitoring everything."

Next week, more than 70 students from Winona State University will serve as poll workers in Winona and Rochester and metro-area cities such as Minneapolis, Oakdale and Woodbury as part of an effort to get more young people involved at the polls. Winona State Prof. Ruth Charles said it's important because the average U.S. poll worker is 71 years old.

"So many times students get involved with a campaign or person, but we're trying to work on civic engagement," Charles said.

Minneapolis election officials trained students from all seven public high schools and DeLaSalle High, a Catholic school near downtown. Sixteen St. Paul high school students have agreed to work at that city's polling places. Ramsey County elections manager Joe

Mansky said his office hopes to work with school districts to recruit more students in the future.

Sixteen- and 17-year-old Minnesota high school students have been able to work at the state's polls for years. But Judy Schwartau, an election specialist for Minneapolis, said it's common for high school students to be more interested in work at the polls during presidential election years.

"You just see more enthusiasm, not just among the students judges but among everyone," said Eagan City Clerk Maria Petersen, who recruited 90 students from Eagan, Burnsville, Eastview and some private high schools.

About 40 students attended the three-hour training session at North High last week. In the past, students might sign up for training but several students never showed up, said North High teacher Jeffrey Buszta.

But not this year. Every student who signed up was there, he said. Buszta said it's most likely because the election has been a hot topic at the school.

Holley said a few of her underage friends are jealous because she's old enough to vote. Vue said it's tough not to be envious of the 18-year-olds.

"I have a friend who said he plans to be the first person in line," he said.

As part of the training, students learned how to use voting equipment, register voters, assist individuals with disabilities and several other duties. They also must help the staff ensure that there's no campaigning at the polls. Kong and Holley said that includes telling voters to remove campaign buttons or cover up other political clothing such as T-shirts.

"No matter what, we've got to treat everyone the same," Vue said.

Earlier this week, Fatima Babu, 17, stood with a group of her friends at DeLaSalle High and examined a map of the city's precincts and polling places. She and about 40 other juniors at the school had completed a student election judge training session and discussed where they'll work next week.

Babu said she didn't mind that she ended up at a south Minneapolis polling place that wasn't as close to her home as some of the other students. She said it's important to go wherever she's needed.

She added: "I'm trying to get into politics right now and this is a good way to understand it."

Patrice Relerford • 612-673-4395

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Amendments to House Bill No. 30  
1st Reading Copy

*Veduted*  
**EXHIBIT** 2  
**DATE** 1/12/09  
**HB** 30

Requested by Representative Franke Wilmer  
For the House State Administration Committee

Prepared by Sue O'Connell  
January 9, 2009 (2:39pm)

1. Page 6.

**Following:** "line 26"

**Insert:** "(2) An individual seeking appointment as a youth  
election judge must have:

(a) written consent of a parent; and

(b) if the individual is a student, written consent from the  
individual's school principal."

**Renumber:** subsequent subsections

2. Page 7, line 2.

**Strike:** "(2) (a) (ii)"

**Insert:** "(3) (a) (ii)"

3. Page 7, line 3.

**Strike:** "(2)"

**Insert:** "(3)"

4. Page 7, line 24.

**Following:** "13-1-101"

**Insert:** ", who meet the requirements of 13-4-107"

- END -